

Exhibit 6

BC asks for Irish project secrecy

By Kevin Cullen

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In a case being watched closely on both sides of the Atlantic, Boston College filed a motion in US District Court yesterday to stop British authorities from getting records from an oral history project involving paramilitary fighters in Northern Ireland.

The college's motion, filed with the US attorney's office, seeks to quash subpoenas from British authorities who want audiotapes and other materials from BC's confidential interviews with former members of the Provisional Irish Republican Army.

The college said the release of the material from its Belfast Project could jeopardize not only the safety of those interviewed, but the two former paramilitary members who conducted the interviews and other BC staffers.

It could also threaten other history projects and even the ongoing peace process in Northern Ireland, BC argues. Individuals who agreed to be part of the Belfast Project were promised that their interviews would not be made public until after their deaths, and to break that promise now could have widespread political consequences, they say.

The filings indicate British authorities are looking for information about murder, conspiracy to murder, incitement to murder, aggravated burglary, false imprisonment, kidnapping, and causing grievous bodily harm.

The college's lawyers expect a hearing in US District Court within weeks, said BC spokesman Jack Dunn.

The British demand has sent a ripple of concern through academia.

"This development has the potential to set an ominous precedent, not only for Boston College but for the entire field of oral history," said Clifford M. Kuhn, associate professor of history at Georgia State University. "I fear the Boston College episode could snowball and have a genuinely chilling effect on oral historical scholarship."

Kuhn, past president of the Oral History Association, has filed an affidavit in support of the BC motion.

In their filings, BC lawyers express frustration over the vagueness of the subpoenas. The court order authorizing them is sealed, and the British agency requesting them unknown. Jeffrey Swope, of the Boston firm Edwards Angell Palmer & Dodge, asked the court to either quash the subpoenas or at least let BC have "access to the documents that describe the purposes of the investigation to enable them to specify with more particularity in what ways the subpoenas are overbroad."

Thomas E. Hachey, University professor of history at BC and executive director of the college's Center for Irish Programs, said in an affidavit that he suspects police in Northern Ireland are seeking the records.

"The fact that these materials are sought by governmental authorities, believed to be the Police Service of Northern Ireland, will almost certainly create needless alarm among otherwise peacefully-reconciled individuals and risks stoking unrest among combative elements of that society who would like nothing more than to see the embers of division fanned into the flames that would consume the hopes of those who seek reconciliation, rather than recrimination," Hachey wrote.
